

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Statement on Efforts To Deter and Punish Hostage-Taking and the Wrongful Detention of United States Nationals

April 27, 2023

Today I am proud to announce that my administration will for the first time deploy a new tool to impose severe economic costs on governments and groups that hold hostage or wrongfully detain Americans around the world.

Since the first day of my administration, we have prioritized the safe return of Americans held hostage or wrongfully detained abroad. We have now brought home dozens of Americans, many of whom had been held since before I took office. Still, too many are suffering and separated from their loved ones, including Americans who remain wrongfully detained in Russia, Iran, and elsewhere. We remain unflinching in our efforts to keep faith with them and their families, to pursue new ways to bring them home until we succeed, and to prevent this from happening to other families in the future.

Today the Department of State and the Department of the Treasury have announced the U.S. Government's first-ever sanctions against actors for engaging in the wrongful detention of Americans. These sanctions against four individuals and two security services in Russia and Iran mean that all of the designees' property and interests in property in the possession or control of U.S. persons are now blocked. These steps to cut off these actors from the legitimate financial system make use of the Executive order that I issued last summer that, itself, built on the 2020 Hostage Recovery and Hostage Taking Accountability Act. That law passed in large part due to the perseverance of the families and so many others in this community who have worked to turn pain into purpose.

Today—and every day—our message to Russia, Iran, and the world is holding hostage or wrongfully detaining Americans is unacceptable. Release them immediately.

NOTE: The statement referred to Members of Parliament Taras Kozak and Oleh Voloshyn of Ukraine and former Ukrainian officials Volodymyr Oliynyk and Vladimir Sivkovich, who accused of working at the direction of the Russian Government to destabilize Ukraine. It also referred to Executive Order 14078.

Categories: Statements by the President : Hostage-taking and wrongful detention of U.S. nationals, deterrence and punishment efforts.

Names: Kozak, Taras; Oliynyk, Volodymyr; Sivkovich, Vladimir; Voloshyn, Oleh.

Subjects: Hostage-taking and wrongful detention of U.S. nationals overseas, deterrence and punishment efforts; Iran, U.S. and international sanctions; Russia, U.S. and international sanctions.

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